United Nations A/67/496

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 October 2012

Original: English

Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 8
General debate

Note verbale dated 3 October 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations has the honour to enclose herewith the written statement of the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks by Mr. Carsten Staur, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Denmark to the United Nations, on 1 October 2012 in the General Assembly.

The Permanent Mission requests that the enclosed text be issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

12-53676 (E) 081012

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Annex to the note verbale dated 3 October 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Right of reply

The Kingdom of Bahrain rejects the inference drawn in the Kingdom of Denmark's statement that calling for reforms is a crime in Bahrain. Every person has the right to disagree with, or dissent from, their Government, and to state that disagreement or dissent publicly, of course, within the limits of orderly discourse in a democratic society. The Danish Government is reminded that there is a critical difference between peaceful expressions of disagreement and incitements to hatred and violence, which damage the social fabric of a nation.

Bahrain's progress in implementing wide-ranging reforms is not determined by whether an individual Government without a diplomatic presence in Bahrain approves of the outcome of a particular Bahraini judicial proceeding. All states desirous of strengthening friendly relations with the Kingdom of Bahrain are invited to study the many cases in which the courts have protected the rights of freedom of expression and assembly, overturned cases and commuted sentences. Publicly available independent reports, including that of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, repose confidence in the Bahraini courts as protectors of the rights of Bahraini citizens. The reform effort extends to both the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and the National Dialogue, in line with which the Bahrain Government has established new, independent institutions with oversight over law enforcement and security agencies, to promote and protect human rights; additionally, a corpus of newly enacted and freely available legislative amendments, policy statements and administrative instructions are already beginning to have a real and positive impact on all Bahrainis.

The Kingdom of Bahrain values the support and encouragement of the international community as it continues with its programme of fully implementing the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and broader reforms.